

First National Meeting of Hispanic Commissions Kansas City, Missouri



Executive Directors of various Hispanic Commissions throughout the US came together for the first time ever to confer on issues of common concern such as Education, Health, Immigration, etc. that affect our Hispanic communities.

This meeting was long over due and undeniably of crucial importance for it served as a forum for information exchange, member networking, and emphasis of issues on a broader level that affect Latino communities.

For many years Latino human rights groups have focused on the immigration issue; however, times are changing. While immigration remains an issue of contend, concern, and importance, we need to recognize that there is a growing population of Latinos born in the US for whom immigration is not and has never been an issue. As members of the Latino community, we have come to realize that those years of focusing solely on immigration has unfortunately, in many ways, divided our communities instead of uniting them.

This, however, does not imply that Latino newcomers to the US and Latinos born and or raised in the US face common issues. All of my colleagues that were in attendance at the forum, unanimously agreed that Education was and is the issue of top priority as well as a common issue with Hispanic communities throughout the nation.

We concurred that access to first-class affordable education has been a challenge for Latinos throughout Washington State and throughout the nation. It affects both young and old, Spanish and non-Spanish speaking, recent immigrants, and second generation Latino-Americans. We, therefore, agreed to make a commitment to all segments of our Latino communities to persevere in this endeavor.

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs continues to support legislation that will make the WASL sensitive to the cultural differences of Latino students and access to affordable higher education. We will also continue to lobby Governor Gregoire for these changes.

Staff
Uriel Iniguez, Executive Director
Alicia Luna, Executive Assistant

Commissioners

Yvonne Lopez Morton,
Chair, Spokane
Gabriel Portugal,
Vice-Chair, Tri-Cities
Ruben Baca, Executive
Committee, Bellingham

Faviola Contreras, Education Committee,
Wenatchee
Lourdes Portillo Salazar, Education
Committee, Bellevue
Graciela Villanueva Lopez, Executive
Committee, Yakima
Rebecca Villareal, Chair Economic
Development Committee, Seattle
Félix L. Negrón, Education Committee
Olympia

PUBLIC MEETING IN MATTAWA

Date: April 15, 2006

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Location: Saddle Mountain Intermediate School (gym)
500 Riverview St.
Mattawa, WA 99349

The purpose of the meeting is for members of the Hispanic community to discuss and comment on issues affecting Latinos, within the local community and statewide.

The Commission will begin with a study session on April 14, 2006 at 1:00pm at Our Lady of the Desert Church, 302 East 4th Street, Mattawa. For more information, please contact the Commission.

Interpreter services will be available.

Take Your Legacy Forward

More than 300 middle school and high school students attended the February 23rd "Take Your Legacy Forward" conference at Centro Bjerde in Pasco. The event was sponsored by the US Department of Energy and the Tri-Cities May 5th Committee. Scientists Mary F. Jarvis, Lina Pacheco, Jaime Navarro, and others shared their experience in these vital fields. The pre-Columbian culture of the Mayans had great astrological and mathematical discoveries. It is, therefore, extremely important that we the Tri-Cities May 5th Committee make these students aware of their roots and or discover and expand their horizons.

Students learned that the Mayan's predictions were guided by mathematical formulas. One great example is that on December 21, 2012 a rare and astronomical and Mayan mythical event will occur. In astronomical terms, the Sun will conjunct the intersection of the Milky Way and the plane of the ecliptic thereby forming a cosmic cross called the Sacred Tree, the World Tree, the Tree of Life which is revered by many cultures.

Students also learned the importance of knowing who they are and their relationship to Mother Earth. Equally important is to always respect cultural differences and to strive for unity. The most inspiring lesson was learning that Science and Mathematics has always been in their culture. Our ancestors left us with a rich scientific and mathematic legacy that needs to be taken forward.

Commissioner, Gabriel Portugal

Washington State COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS

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2006 Hispanic / Latino Legislative Day

¡Fortaleciendo Nuestra Comunidad!

"Empowering Our Community" was the theme of the Legislative Day 2006 event held on February 8th at the State Capital. More than 200 Hispanic/Latinos visited the State Capitol to attend the first annual Hispanic/Latino Legislative Day. The topics of discussions were Education, Farm Worker Issues, Immigration, Economic Development, and Health Care.

The participants listened to leaders, in each of these topics, discuss the state of affairs of the Hispanics/Latinos in the state of Washington. For many participants this was their first experience visiting the capital and having the opportunity to see where their representative/legislators make important decisions that affect their lives.

At the conclusion of the event, with the invitation of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the participants gathered for a reception where many had an opportunity to be photographed with the Governor.

The event successfully reached its primary objective which was to evoke a dialogue among the participants and show a presence of the Hispanic/Latinos in the state Capital.



The phone calls, letters and e-mails of encouragement, the information sharing, the continued support as well as the community involvement reinforces our belief that the time has come for the Hispanics/Latinos to unite on our common ideas and goals.

With the public's continued support, we look forward to another year of working on our mission and raising the consciousness level of the Hispanic/Latino population. Our goal is to increase participation in civic affairs within the communities which we live in and thus reinvigorate the Hispanic/Latino population.

M. Alexia Iniguez
Secretary, Hispanic Legislative Day

ELLF Scholarships

Eastside Latino Leadership Forum awards their first Education Scholarships to local students.

On February 28, 2006, the Eastside Latino Leadership Forum (ELLF) of Bellevue, WA awarded their first education scholarships to local Eastside students. Receiving the scholarships were Maria Serrano, Gonzalo Betancourt, Dallilah Bernal, Sergio Rodriguez-Hernandez, Sergio de Santiago (not present) and Marta Campo. These students are presently attending University of Washington, Central Washington University, and Seattle Pacific University. With the help of many community members, ELLF was successful in developing a scholarship fund to provide financial assistance to Latino students attending community colleges or 4-year universities in Washington State. With their continued support, we hope to assist many more students in the future.



Eastside Latino Leadership Forum, which has been in existence since 2002, is composed of a group of individuals who wish to make a positive difference in the lives of Latinos living on the greater Eastside. Our mission is to empower Eastside Latinos through education, training and civic involvement.

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MEETING DATES 2006

February 9-11

Olympia

April 14-15

Mattawa

June 23-24

Yakima

August 18-19

Quincy

October 20-21

South Park, Seattle

December

Teleconference

**For more information
visit our website,
www.cha.wa.gov**

**Washington State
Commission on Hispanic Affairs**
P.O. Box 40924
Olympia, WA 98504-0924
Phone: (800)443-0294
(360)725-5661
Fax: (360)586-9501
Email: hispanic@cha.wa.gov

Director Notes

About 150 Hispanics gathered on the Capitol steps under a February 8th morning drizzle to kick off the daylong campaign, chanting "Juntos, Si Se Puede" – "united, yes we can". They came to address issues facing the Hispanic community in WA State. This is just the beginning for as our Hispanic population continues to grow, State Legislators will continue to hear from their Hispanic constituents about the need for improved health care, education, and economic development.

Planning for the 2006 Hispanic Legislative Day started two years ago by the WA State Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA) when the idea was proposed to create a Coalition that would take the lead in organizing the event. This led to several conference calls that were initiated in September 2005 and which later led to community meetings in Tacoma, Wapato, and Moses Lake. A final meeting took place in Ellensburg in which a facilitator was hired to assist in the planning phase. In Ellensburg is where community members that were in attendance drafted an agenda and elected Jenaro Castañeda, Félix Negrón and Alexia Iñiguez to the Executive Board of the Coalition. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen reasons, Castañeda and Negrón had to step down from the Executive Board. Alexia Iñiguez, however, with constant support from the WA State Commission on Hispanic Affairs continued to pursue the vision of a Coalition to represent the Hispanic community.

Community recruitment started to increase and subsequently Carlos Jimenez was selected by members of the Coalition as Chair of the Hispanic Legislative Day Committee. Shortly thereafter, Carlos recruited Tomás Villanueva and Hector Franco as Co-Chairs and Alexia Iñiguez became Secretary of the Committee.

This encouraging beginning brought several challenges. A large number of community members were hesitant to join the Committee doubting that a legislative day for Hispanics would become a reality. Despite this setback, the Committee moved forward collaborating with the WA State Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and after much hard work, they hosted a day of Latino activism that is still generating positive feedback.

The original goal of the Hispanic Legislative Day was to create an agenda that would address issues faced by the Hispanic community, incite enthusiasm, and foster unity thereby strengthening the Coalition. These goals were met and we are now looking forward to a bigger, better, and more united legislative day next year.

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs applauds and thanks all the people who worked extremely hard to make "Hispanic Legislative Day" a reality. Above all, a heartfelt and cordial thank you to Carlos Jimenez and Alexia Iñiguez for their dedication, perseverance, and the countless hours they spent planning this event.

In addition to the Hispanic Legislative Day, CHA hosted a Legislative Reception in conjunction with the WA State Commission on African American Affairs, the WA State Commission on Asian Pacific Affairs, and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, and we participated in the Latino Educational Achievement Project (LEAP) Conference. The Legislative Reception was a great success and one in which our talented Hispanic youth from the Wenatchee High School Mariachi Band were highlighted. The Legislators who attended were in awe and are still talking about them. Similarly, our Public Meeting at the LEAP Conference which was held at the Red Lion Hotel in Olympia, filled our meeting room with Hispanic students voicing their concerns regarding passing the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), acquiring funding for higher education, and convincing their parents of the value of higher education. The CHA Commissioners responded to the students' questions and assured them that they will put pressure on Washington State Legislators to keep their issues in mind.

A special thank you to Ricardo Iñiguez, the Wenatchee Mariachi Band members; the Directors of the State Ethnic Commissions' and their staff as well as staff and volunteers of the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs for making the Legislative Reception a successful and memorable event.

Uriel Iñiguez

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS MISSION STATEMENT

The Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA) was created by a Governor's Executive Order and established in statute in 1971. As mandated by the state legislature, the Commission's functions are to improve public policy development and the delivery of government services to the Hispanic community through the following means:

- Identifying and defining issues concerning the rights and needs of Washington State's Hispanic Community.
- Advising the Governor and state agencies on the development of relevant policies, plans and programs that affect Hispanics.
- Advising the legislature on issues of concern to the state's Hispanic community.
- Establishing relationships with state agencies, local governments, and members of the private sector.

Important Reports, Research & Events

Immigrants' Experiences In The Northwest

<http://www.pcu.org/campaigns/InOurOwnWords.pdf>

ETS Study Looks at Fragile Futures of High-achieving Latino Students

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICFRAGFUT.pdf>

Farm Worker Pesticide Project | El Proyecto de Campesinos y Pesticidas

<http://www.fwpp.org/?page=MedicalMonitoring>

Washington Association for Multicultural Education (WSAME) Events Calendar

<http://www.wsame.org/>

Legislative Session 2006

Bill Information

We want to thank our new volunteers **María Peña** and **Caitlin Simmons** for their great work during the 2006 Legislative Session and also for their outstanding research and testimonials.

Continuing Bills

SHB 1311	Minimum wage violations
SHB 1685	Health ins policy mandates
3SHB 1815	Small business incubator
SHB 2245	Middle school & high school
HB 2343	Juvenile waiver of rights
HB 2360	Studying small loans
SHB 2397	Mental health/children
HB 2398	State health care programs
HB 2423	Schools/planning programs
HB 2455	Basic health plan
HB 2473	Unfair prescription drug practice
SHB 2483	Child care providers
HB 2489	Assistance to students
HB 2501	Mental health services
HB 2540	Individual health insurance
HB 2582	High school completion program
HB 2623	Agricultural workers
HB 2630	Opportunity grant program
HB 3241	High school diploma
HCR 4411	Equitable opportunity
SSB 5910	UW law school program
SB 6165	Family child care providers
SB 6171	Bilingual/special ed teacher
SB 6194	Multicultural edu/health
SSB 6195	Health impact assessments
SSB 6197	Health disparities council
SB 6348	Legal aid
SB 6352	Agricultural worker

www.cha.wa.gov

Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Cinco de Mayo Celebration at Columbia Park in Kennewick, Washington.

The Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a Mariachi Competition that will bring Groups from the Pacific Northwest including Mariachi Huanachi, a High School Student Mariachi Group. They will be competing for cash prizes.

This years Cinco de Mayo Celebration will include a joint activity with the WSU Extension Office "Fishing Kids Program". Over twelve hundred 4 to 14 year old kids with a parent will be registering (\$5) to participate in this fishing event. The Columbia Park Pond will be stocked with some 7000 trout. (3 fish limit per child). All children will receive a fishing pole and reel.

For more information contact the Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce at (509) 542-0933, or Lauri E.B. Sherfey WSU Extension Office (509) 545-3511.

State Joint Legislative Reception



Governor Christine Gregorie with Mariachi Huenachi.



Governor Christine Gregorie with Semillitas de Oro



Dr. Terry Bergeson and Uriel Iñiguez with Bamboo Dancers